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Chairperson: Mr. Andrei Metelitsa (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Belarus)
later: Ms. Ogwu (Chairperson) ..... (Nigeria)

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In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Metelitsa (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/63/66, A/63/225 and A/63/76-E/2008/54)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/63/304 and A/C.2/63/3)

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(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/63/294 and A/C.2/63/3)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session (*continued*) (A/63/25)

1. **Mr. Clough** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that the Committee's discussion of sustainable development was particularly relevant to his organization's core goal of promoting economic growth in developing countries and economies in transition in a sustainable manner. It was important to tackle obstacles to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in an integrated and coordinated manner.

2. UNIDO had concluded that it was best able to contribute to medium- and long-term solutions to the global food crisis through technical and advisory cooperation to boost agricultural production and encouragement of adoption of post-harvest technologies to increase storage capabilities and marketability. It had developed partnerships with a number of international financial institutions with a view to expanding its agribusiness activities. It was encouraging cleaner and more efficient resource use by promoting recycling, discouraging use of hazardous and toxic materials, emphasizing the sale of services over the sale of products, and encouraging a shift from non-renewable to renewable energy sources. It had collaborated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to establish a network of cleaner production centres and had received an award for its work in phasing out ozone-depleting substances in developing countries.

3. Climate protection activities should focus on the industrial sector, which accounted for one third of global primary energy consumption and carbon emissions. Clean energy use must be emphasized in developing countries, where access to energy was a key component of economic growth and poverty reduction. In that connection, UNIDO had been closely involved in a major programme in West Africa to increase the use of renewable energy and promote energy efficiency in industry and households.

4. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)), said that in small island developing States, impacts of climate change were increasing migration from outer islands and hinterlands to urban areas. Not only did environmental factors have an impact on migration, but migration in turn had an impact on the environment. In collaboration with the United Nations University (UNU) and with the sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation, IOM had commissioned seven studies that together would comprise a state-of-the-art review of the relationship between migration and the environment. It was also working with UNEP, UNU and the Munich Re Foundation to establish a climate change, environment and migration alliance to be launched at the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in late November, with a view to enhancing collaboration among stakeholders in all sectors to incorporate

migration considerations into environment, development and climate change agendas.

5. IOM was also working with refugee and displaced persons organizations. The overall goal was to gain recognition of migration as a potential adaptation to climate change while increasing the resilience of vulnerable populations to environmental impacts. He was glad to see increasing recognition of the linkages between climate change and migration, exemplified by the inclusion of the climate change, migration and development nexus as a potential focus of the Global Forum on Migration and Development to be held in Greece the following year.

6. **Mr. Colmenares** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had begun to create a new model of sustainable development — a socialist and humanistic model that took into account the potentialities and environmental characteristics of each geographical region of the country. Sustainable development was at the heart of his country's efforts to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, it had launched its "sowing the seeds of oil" initiative, under which oil revenues were allocated to national and regional social programmes and clean energy was used to construct communications systems within the framework of an endogenous development plan.

7. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela urged governments, international and regional organizations within the Economic and Social Council, the funds and programmes, regional commissions and specialized agencies of the United Nations, the Global Environment Facility and other intergovernmental organizations to adopt measures to ensure the effective application and follow-up of the outcome of the World Summit for Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and to submit reports on the actual progress made.

8. The environmental and climate change regime set out in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol was sufficiently flexible to match the varying situations and capacities of each country and should be maintained for the long term. The Bali Roadmap which proposed some ways to amplify compliance with the commitments laid down in the Convention, was not a new agreement. It called on industrialized nations to observe the first period of commitment and to define the targets of the second.

9. **Ms. Morake** (Botswana) said that, in the context of the current food, energy and climate crises, the United Nations must accord equal priority to the three pillars of sustainable development and to ensure the proper coordination of its actions. The international community should therefore scale up its efforts to address the interrelated challenges of sustainable agricultural development which, by extension, included poverty in rural Africa. It must also demonstrate the political will necessary to implement the commitments entered into under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

10. Her country was doing its part through the formulation of a comprehensive economic strategy for the implementation of its obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, its involvement in the clean development mechanism and the Air Pollution Information Network in Africa, and the intensification of pollution monitoring networks in the urban areas and other population centres. However, developing countries such as Botswana needed increased financial and technical resources to strengthen their climate change prevention, adaptation and mitigation efforts. Those obligations were being mainstreamed into the tenth national development plan for the period 2009-2016.

11. In recent years Botswana had experienced erratic rains, prolonged droughts and extreme temperatures, which had had a negative impact on human health and on food security. Her delegation therefore welcomed the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018) and looked forward to the accelerated implementation of the Convention, especially in Africa.

12. There was a critical need for coherence and synergy among the Rio Conventions, including the harmonization of their programmes. In addition, the assistance provided to countries should not be fragmented but should instead be designed to enhance complementarity among the Conventions.

13. Lastly, her Government supported the efforts to strengthen international environmental governance and welcomed the leadership role of UNEP in that regard.

14. **Mr. Berguño** (Chile) welcomed the offer by Brazil to host a "Rio + 20" summit and wished also to reiterate Chile's support for the small island developing States. Itself a victim of climate change, which had caused melting of the country's glaciers, damage to its entire water network, and droughts and erratic rains, Chile truly understood how climate change affected countries which, as the representative of the Marshall Islands had said, were sometimes only 2 metres above sea level.

15. **Mr. Batjargal** (World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) drew attention to the third World Climate Conference, to be held in Geneva from 31 August to 4 September 2009, which would consider scientific advances in seasonal, inter-annual and multi-decadal climate predictions and promote their practical application. Better climate prediction information could open up new opportunities to policymakers in such areas as water and agricultural management, disaster mitigation and response, urban planning and energy production. The Conference aimed to ensure that effective climate services were available to enable everyone to adapt to and plan for climate change, thereby strengthening regional and national capabilities at all levels. That task was all the more urgent in view of the expected increase in the frequency and intensity of climate-related hazards. Only by reducing such threats could the international community hope to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

16. *Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Chairperson, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 50: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/63/291, A/63/353 and E/2008/64)

17. **Ms. Tibaijuka** (Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Habitat I) (A/63/291), and the report of the Secretary-General on coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (E/2008/64), said that the underlying threat to all of the current global crises was rapid and chaotic urbanization. Half the world's population was already living in cities, and by 2030 that proportion would reach two thirds. While cities produced most of the world's economic growth, they also contributed disproportionately to energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. In the North, urbanization was encroaching on agriculture, while the South was witnessing an explosion of informal and unplanned settlements and slums that relied primarily on biomass for energy, resulting in deforestation, pollution, and contamination of water and food supplies.

18. The sub-prime mortgage crisis was intimately linked to rapid urbanization. The crisis had resulted from the belief that market mechanisms could provide housing to all income groups, and it was paradoxical that massive public sector intervention had been required to restore trust in the markets. Keynes had resurfaced and was bound to replace Milton Friedman. Nevertheless, although not neglected completely as it had been in the past, housing finance still did not occupy its appropriate place on the development agenda, and she strongly recommended the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the role of government in housing finance systems.

19. She highlighted a number of items in the two reports, including the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, which had made substantial progress in streamlining operations and maximizing efficiency, but was still in need of additional resources to be fully implemented. She drew attention to her organization's advocacy efforts, which would be spearheaded by the Global Campaign on Sustainable Urbanization to begin the following week at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum in Nanjing, China. Another focus was pre-investment capacity-building, which included, among other things, innovative but low-risk housing finance. With the aim of taking a more holistic approach to the social, economic and environmental aspects of urbanization, UN-Habitat was forging strategic partnerships with other United Nations specialized agencies. Its regional efforts were focused on water and sanitation and consolidating relationships with international and regional financial institutions around the world. Six of its eight pilot country programmes had achieved positive outcomes in incorporating urbanization-related issues into national and United Nations planning documents. That success was due to the work of national Habitat Programme Managers, who had

generally not been treated equitably by the United Nations system. She urged the Committee to recommend that there be no differentiation between international and senior national staff in United Nations country teams.

20. **Ms. Greenaway** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, observed that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme played a unique and key role in the overall pursuit of sustainable development, with the Habitat Agenda being a significant component of the broader agenda of internationally agreed development goals. Since a key factor in achieving sustainable development was managing cities and urban sprawl in a sustainable manner, the efforts of UN-Habitat to deepen the international community's understanding of the impact of rapid urbanization were encouraging.

21. Recent trends in human settlements, including increasing urbanization and growing mega-cities, heightened the need to focus on implementing the Habitat Agenda, in particular as it related to Millennium Development Goal 7 and its targets of halving by 2015 the number of people living without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and of achieving by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers. The Secretary-General's report (A/63/291) indicated that the current energy and food crises were likely to exacerbate an already growing trend of urban inequality, significantly compounding the socio-economic challenges already faced by the millions of poor people living in urban areas. The Group of 77 and China urged UN-Habitat to continue monitoring that situation with the aim of helping to reverse the trend.

22. Meeting the Habitat Agenda goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development would require an integrated approach based on nationally owned strategies covering full and productive employment and decent work for all; access to safe water and sanitation; poverty eradication; the provision of modern, affordable energy services; and waste collection and disposal. In particular, the Group of 77 and China emphasized the importance of meeting the target on water and sanitation under Goal 7 of the MDGs, noting that the current year's review session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had not adequately echoed and supported the priority given to water and sanitation in developing countries' national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. There was scope for UN-Habitat to play a greater role in that area, within its specific mandate and through the implementation of its medium-term strategic and institutional plan.

23. The role of cities relative to the climate change crisis was another important factor. Analysis by UN-Habitat showed that consumption patterns and lifestyles with regard to land-use and urban sprawl had a critical impact. Promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production, according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and taking into account the economic and social needs of developing countries, was critical to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and should be given greater priority.

24. With regard to UN-Habitat's fundraising activities, she expressed concern at the imbalance in the levels of core and non-core funding. The continued unpredictability of funding, attributable to the imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions and to the dependency on a small number of donors, lessened the ability of the Human Settlements Programme to function as Member States required, and hampered effective and efficient implementation of the Habitat Agenda in line with the national priorities of developing countries. The Group of 77 and China urged the international community to give due attention and support to achieving the goals of the Habitat Agenda, including through the provision of financial support on a predictable basis.

25. The Group welcomed the adoption of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, the UN-Habitat Governing Council's approval of experimental reimbursable seeding operations to finance pro-poor housing and urban development and the series of ministerial meetings held at the regional level on housing and urban development. Those meetings should continue to focus on integrating the Habitat Agenda and related internationally agreed development goals into national plans and strategies.

26. **Mr. Muita** (Kenya) speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, observed that one of the major challenges of rapid, unplanned and unsustainable urbanization was the growth of slums and other informal settlements within and adjacent to major towns and cities. About 1.2 billion people lived in slums, a figure that was likely to rise exponentially if remedial measures were not taken. Indeed, if the

current trend continued, some of the major cities in developing countries might well be transformed into slums, which gravely undermine efforts to achieve sustainable development through implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

27. The current food, energy and financial crises would seriously affect the achievement of the Habitat Agenda goals. Together with the challenges emanating from climate change, they required new and innovative approaches to urbanization. The food and energy crises were interlinked: urbanization affected land use and water resource management, which, in turn, affected food production, while on the other hand, about 75 per cent of the world's energy was consumed in urban areas. Thus, it was not surprising that the food and energy crises were leading to widespread social unrest and political protests in almost all the regions of the world.

28. The vast majority of urban areas in African countries lacked safe housing, access to water and sanitation, modern energy supply and waste collection and disposal. Urbanization also brought a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems, including some related to consumption and production patterns. Achieving the twin goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world required urgent attention, particularly as they were closely related to such issues as poverty, employment, transportation and the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation.

29. To deal with the growing challenge of urbanization, African leaders had established the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development. At its July meeting, held in Abuja, the Conference had considered the challenges of housing and urbanization facing Africa, and had produced the Abuja resolution and the Abuja Plan of Action containing important pragmatic decisions and commitments in the areas of funding, capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation and institutional and regulatory measures that could bring real change to the state of housing and urban development in Africa. The African Group hoped for the support of all stakeholders in the implementation of those decisions.

30. The African Group commended UN-Habitat for initiating the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013. It hoped that the Plan, with its goal of putting in place by 2013 the necessary policies, strategies and conditions to stabilize the growth of slums and subsequently reduce the number of slum dwellers, would fast-track the achievement of the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals.

31. The Group expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved thus far in the implementation of the experimental reimbursable seeding operations, and, in particular, the finalization of the Operational Procedures and Operational Manual and the establishment of the Steering and Monitoring Committee.

32. For UN-Habitat to succeed, it needed adequate financial and other resources. The African Group called on Member States in a position to do so to increase their contributions to UN-Habitat funds, activities and projects.

33. **Mr. Kabir** (Bangladesh) observed that urbanization was growing rapidly, with half the world's population now living in urban areas — a proportion that was expected to reach two thirds by the year 2030. Such an increase would cause further expansion of slums, greater lack of basic services, including water and sanitation, and changes in consumption and production patterns.

34. Developing countries and the poor would be hardest hit by the current multiple crises of rising food and fuel prices, climate change, high volatility in the commodity markets, and significant downturn in the international financial system. A concerted and integrated approach was needed to address the social, economic and environmental challenges posed by those crises.

35. Sustainable urbanization must be integrated into national development strategies and mainstreamed into United Nations operational activities, but not at the expense of rural development. Every citizen of a country deserved a secure supply of basic services and employment opportunities. Sustainable urban development should be based on environmentally sound technologies. While cities only occupied just over 2 per cent of land, they currently produced 70 per cent of waste and of greenhouse gas emissions. Environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services were therefore critically important to ensure environmentally friendly and pro-poor urbanization.

36. It had been estimated that for the period 2005-2020, $20 billion a year would be required to attain the MDG 7 target relating to slum-dwellers and to prevent the future formation of slums. However, official development assistance (ODA) to the urban sector had remained largely stagnant at $2 billion per annum in real terms for the past decade. Bangladesh called on the developed countries to increase the flow of ODA in support of pro-poor housing and urban development in developing countries. Innovative financial mechanisms could supplement domestic resources and ODA; and microcredit programmes would afford the urban poor access to credit. Special attention should be accorded to the least developed countries, as demographic growth and the physical expansion of towns and cities far outpaced their investments in housing and basic urban infrastructure and international support to them was lacking. Future UN-Habitat reports should include a section on the status of sustainable urbanization in the least developed countries, based on disaggregated data and information.

37. While UN-Habitat had made some progress in its resource mobilization efforts, its total resources were far from adequate to implement its core mandates. Minimal core resources, unpredictability of funding and dependency on a small number of donors were major threats to its effective operation.

38. **Mr. Nasir Ali Khan** (Indonesia) said that with nearly half the world's population living in urban areas, the imperative to address sustainable development in the urban context had never been greater. The Habitat Agenda's twin goals of shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world had become even more significant in the light of the current multiple crises and climate change. The pressures of rising fuel and food costs and the economic crisis on 1.2 billion urban slum-dwellers could reverse progress made thus far and pose new obstacles to further progress, which meant that greater attention should be focused on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda within the context of attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

39. In the short term, measures to alleviate the effects of rising food and energy prices, emergency shelters for communities affected by natural disasters and conflicts and capacity-building measures for the purposes of integrating reconstruction and recovery would be vital. For the medium term, Indonesia welcomed the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013 and its objective of establishing by 2013 the necessary conditions to stabilize slum growth and reduce numbers of slum-dwellers. In the long term, it would be important to address rural underdevelopment in developing countries, which had been a major cause of unprecedented urban growth.

40. Development strategies based on non-agricultural industries, together with distorting agricultural subsidies granted by developed countries, had resulted in the decline of agricultural activities and rural development in developing countries, resulting not only in unsustainable urbanization but also in food insecurity. Promoting capacity-building for sustainable livelihoods in poor rural populations was as important as it was in poor urban communities. The guidelines on decentralization adopted by the Habitat Governing Council provided a good basis for developing strong local responses and capacities. At the same time, measures to ensure access to clean water and sanitation, health and education should be taken in both urban and rural settings with a view to bringing about equitable growth and pro-poor human settlement.

41. In seeking an urbanization model that could support Indonesia's development, his Government had been applying population control, economic incentive, transmigration and social policies relating to urban and rural development. It had promoted urban-rural linkages and synergies that included greater cooperation between rural and central governments. Through intercity and interregional cooperation, it had sought to address labour supply and demand issues and the growth of suburban areas bridging urban and rural areas.

42. Central to the realization of sustainable urbanization was the international community's support. An international environment conducive to capacity-building measures and pro-poor growth must be created. While governments were chiefly responsible for taking those measures, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations were indispensable partners.

43. **Mr. Liu** Yuyin (China) said that despite tireless efforts by countries and some positive results, the question of human settlements was far from being resolved, and the situation remained grave, particularly in developing countries. Sustainable development offered the only solution. A certain rate of economic

growth was needed to solve the question of human settlements, especially in the developing countries, but that development must be pursued from a scientific perspective and in a coordinated and sustainable manner, taking into account such concerns as population growth, productivity, the rational exploitation of resources and environmental protection.

44. Improving human settlements in developing countries should become the centrepiece of improving human settlements globally. The international community, and the developed countries in particular, should demonstrate political will and good faith by fostering an external environment favourable to the economic and social development of developing countries and by honouring their commitments in the fields of finance, technology, human resources, market access and debt relief.

45. A comprehensive partnership must be established. As human settlements development covered a wide range of fields and included a multitude of elements, it required the full participation of society as a whole, including not only central governments but also local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. His Government accorded top priority to improving the human habitat. China was upgrading its urban infrastructure, and its environmental preservation efforts in urban areas had been a remarkable success. As a result, the cities were functioning more effectively and residential construction in both urban and rural areas was proceeding at full speed. China was ready to step up exchanges and cooperation with the international community in the field of human settlements development, including through events such as the fourth session of the World City Forum to be held in November in Nanjing, under the theme "Harmonious Urbanization".

46. **Ms. Deo** (India) said that her delegation supported the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, particularly the focus on strengthening the catalytic and pre-investment role of UN-Habitat. In that context, she welcomed the progress made towards the early operationalization of the experimental reimbursable seeding operations, which would enable UN-Habitat to assist national development programmes. Her Government had been actively promoting institutional housing finance to the poorer and more vulnerable sectors of society and she therefore hoped that the experimental phase would lead to an increase in follow-up investment.

47. Her delegation supported the guidelines on decentralization approved by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. Her country had always advocated greater involvement of local authorities in the decision-making and implementation process and had worked to make those authorities more representative and to increase the scope of their activities.

48. Her delegation was concerned that the regular budget resources of UN-Habitat remained low and therefore supported the request for them to be increased. The international community would also need to provide additional financial and technical assistance if the Millennium Development Goals related to UN-Habitat were to be achieved. Such efforts should focus on ensuring productive employment, durable economic and physical infrastructure and food security. South-South initiatives should also be supported through triangular cooperation.

49. Her delegation agreed that the urban poor were among the most exposed victims of the current food and energy crises. It also agreed that rational land use planning, green building codes and energy-efficient transport options were among the most effective measures to reduce energy consumption and emissions. In that context, she noted that her Government had adopted legislation to promote the efficient use of energy and to promote the use of compressed natural gas for public transport.

50. India's Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission provided land tenure, affordable shelter, water, sanitation, education, health care and social security services to the poor and was complemented by urban employment and urban safety programmes. An integral strategy promoting affordable rural housing included the distribution of grants-in-aid for the construction of dwelling units and upgrading of temporary housing and a poverty eradication programme focusing on the creation of jobs, economic infrastructure and community and social assets.

51. **Ms. Zemene** (Ethiopia) said that global challenges such as the food and fuel crises required a concerted and integrated approach that addressed the problem of poverty. While urbanization helped to reduce rural poverty, rural development was also of paramount importance. Enhanced productivity in the

agricultural sector would increase the income of the rural poor and accelerate the pace of sustainable urban development. Her delegation therefore supported the call for the Economic and Social Council to include an urban pillar as a cross-cutting issue. The coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and related Millennium Development Goals was essential in order to address urban challenges in an effective manner. Her delegation also welcomed the decision of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat to approve the medium-term strategy and institutional plan for 2008-2013 and urged development partners to continue their efforts to implement the Habitat Agenda.

52. The Government of Ethiopia was implementing a major low-cost housing scheme to provide decent shelter for the urban poor, particularly those living in slum areas. The scheme had become an important means of employment generation for students from technical and vocational schools. Small and microenterprises were also being promoted with a view to increasing household income.

53. It was high time for the international community to give equal treatment to all of the internationally agreed development goals, and the target set to improve the quality of life of slum-dwellers was of particular relevance to urban development in many developing countries. In that connection, special emphasis must be placed on the growing unemployment problem in urban areas. The United Nations, development partners and other stakeholders therefore needed to take effective steps to build institutional capacities and to promote urban-rural and urban-urban linkages.

54. **Mr. Emozozo** (Nigeria) said that the daunting challenges of rapid urbanization underscored the need for renewed efforts to provide shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. The Habitat Agenda was intimately linked with sustainable development. His delegation therefore called for additional financial support for UN-Habitat to enable it to provide adequate assistance to Member States, particularly developing countries.

55. The medium-term strategy and institutional plan provided a strong framework for improved service delivery and for the transformation of UN-Habitat into a more results-oriented organization. His delegation supported the experimental reimbursable seeding operations as an innovative mechanism for financing pro-poor housing. The successful operation of the mechanism would facilitate access to the funds required to provide affordable housing to low-income groups.

56. The achievement of sustainable urbanization and the reduction of poverty required the full cooperation of all stakeholders in the Habitat Agenda. His delegation welcomed the partnerships established with the private sector, local authorities and other United Nations agencies to enhance the capacity of UN-Habitat to assist developing countries in meeting the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals. For its part, Nigeria was committed to the Habitat Agenda and had put in place appropriate polices designed to make significant improvements in the lives of most urban slum-dwellers by 2020.

57. **Ms. Ovcharenko** (Russian Federation) said that international cooperation on human settlements was an important component of the global agenda for sustainable development. She supported the strengthening of UN-Habitat as the key United Nations entity in that area and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the human settlement goals formulated in the Millennium Development Declaration and in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

58. Her delegation agreed with the recommendations to improve the effectiveness of UN-Habitat activities and to strengthen cooperation between the Programme and Governments at the national level. It also supported the efforts of UN-Habitat to mitigate the social, economic and environmental consequences of the climate, food, energy and financial crises. However, such efforts should be considered in the context of the Programme's main activities, namely helping Member States provide their populations with decent housing, eradicating poverty and addressing social problems in the context of urban development.

59. The current year had marked the launch of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, which would help to focus the activity of the Programme and to broaden its financial base. One important element was the development and strengthening of UN-Habitat partnerships, especially with the Governments of interested countries at the national and local levels. It was important to increase cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and to strengthen the inter-agency coordination of UN-Habitat

with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other organizations and institutions of the United Nations system working in related areas.

60. It was essential to enhance the quality of the management of UN-Habitat by improving monitoring and accountability, introducing mechanisms to evaluate projects implemented under the Programme and further enhancing methods for the collection and analysis of statistics on human settlements.

61. Her country and UN-Habitat had engaged in fruitful cooperation on a number of housing reform projects in the Russian Federation in the period from 1997 to 2007. The experience gained from those projects could be used to implement similar initiatives in other countries.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.